

YEAR 1, EASTER 5, FRIDAY: MORNING PRAYER

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon

To escape from thy hand is impossible; for the ungodly, refusing to know thee, were scourged by the strength of thy arm, pursued by unusual rains and hail and relentless storms, and utterly consumed by fire. For—most incredible of all—in the water, which quenches all things, the fire had still greater effect, for the universe defends the righteous. At one time the flame was restrained, so that it might not consume the creatures sent against the ungodly, but that seeing this they might know that they were being pursued by the judgment of God; and at another time even in the midst of water it burned more intensely than fire, to destroy the crops of the unrighteous land. Instead of these things thou didst give thy people food of angels, and without their toil thou didst supply them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste. For thy sustenance manifested thy sweetness toward thy children; and the bread, ministering to the desire of the one who took it, was changed to suit every one's liking. Snow and ice withstood fire without melting, so that they might

know that the crops of their enemies were being destroyed by the fire that blazed in the hail and flashed in the showers of rain; whereas the fire, in order that the righteous might be fed, even forgot its native power. For creation, serving thee who hast made it, exerts itself to punish the unrighteous, and in kindness relaxes on behalf of those who trust in thee.

Therefore at that time also, changed into all forms, it served thy all-nourishing bounty, according to the desire of those who had need, so that thy sons, whom thou didst love, O Lord, might learn that it is not the production of crops that feeds man, but that thy word preserves those who trust in thee. For what was not destroyed by fire was melted when simply warmed by a fleeting ray of the sun, to make it known that one must rise before the sun to give thee thanks, and must pray to thee at the dawning of the light; for the hope of an ungrateful man will melt like wintry frost, and flow away like waste water. Great are thy judgments and hard to describe; therefore uninstructed souls have gone astray.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans

Let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for any one who thinks it unclean. If your brother is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for any one to make others fall by what he eats; it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble. The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God; happy is he who has no reason to judge himself for what he approves. But he who has doubts is condemned, if he eats, because he does not

act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from
faith is sin.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.